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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 MANAMA 000592

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SUBJECT: A FIELD GUIDE TO BAHRAINI POLITICAL PARTIES

REF: A. 05 MANAMA 1773 B. 06 MANAMA 49 C. 06 MANAMA 1728 D. 07 MANAMA 113 E. 07 MANAMA 190 F. 07 MANAMA 810 G. 07 MANAMA 1046 H. MANAMA 336 I.

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Ereli for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

- 1.(SBU) Summary: This message describes the leading political groupings in Bahrain. The Wifaq party remains the most popular party among the me
- 2.(SBU) The 2002 constitution revived the 40-member, elected Majlis Al Nawab (Council of Representatives) after a 27 year hiatus. Although poli
- 3.(C) Wifaq is the leading Shi'a political society. It is also the largest political party in Bahrain, both in terms of its membership and its
- 4.(SBU) Wifaq's base includes most of Bahrain's poorer Shi'a; well-off Shi'a gravitate toward more secular societies or avoid politics. Wifaq c
- 5.(C) Wifaq works to combat perceived discrimination by the Sunni-dominated government through legislation and disciplined street demonstration
- 6.(U) For more on Wifaq and its relationship with Haq (paras 20-22), see septel. Al Asala Political Society MANAMA 00000592 002 OF 004 -----
- 7.(SBU) Asala is exclusively Sunni and is closely associated with Salafist ideology. Al Tarbiya Al Islamiya (Islamic Education Charity Society)
- 8.(C) Asala says its goals are to increase the standard of living for Bahrainis; strengthen political, social and economic stability; and enhar
- 9.(SBU) Minbar is Bahrain's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and has seven seats in parliament. It often cooperates with the Salafi political
- 10.(SBU) Four independent members of parliament formed the Mustaqbal bloc after they were elected. The bloc bills itself as the only secular gr
- 11.(SBU) Wa'ad is a socialist party formed by returning exiles in 2002. It failed to win any seats in the 2006 parliamentary elections despite
- 12.(SBU) Established in 2001, APDS represents Bahrain's former communists. Most of its approximately 100 members MANAMA 00000592 003 OF 004 wer
- 13.(SBU) APDS controlled the General Federation of Trade Unions until Wifaq won control of the federation in February 2008. Al Meethaq (Nations
- 14.(SBU) Wealthy businessmen from well-known families of both sects founded Meethaq in 2002. Meethaq is a pro-government party formerly backed
- 15.(SBU) Amal is the non-violent heir to the defunct Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, which launched a failed uprising in 1981 insf
- 16.(C) Amal has no seats in parliament, and continues to lose influence in the Shi'a community to Wifaq. The Ministry of Justice and Islamic af